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Barry and the CIA

Ideologues and political realists still argue the propriety of the CIA's underwriting international activities by student and labor groups. Was it a disaster for America? Or was its exposure the disaster? Contrariwise, was it simply a prudent and necessary thing to do?

Out of all this one voice emerges calm and clear, that of Barry Goldwater. The one undebatably good piece of news to come out of the tempest has been the evidence that Barry has not lost his master touch at putting complex events into easy focus.

What the agency did was O.K. with B. G., but how come, he wants to know, all the money went to "left - wing" causes? He'd like to spread it around a little and get some covert support for the Young Republicans.

He's right, of course, as always—and as a matter of fact it immediately developed that one highly conservative group, the Cuban Freedom Committee, had received more than $1 million from the CIA. But why limit the spending principle to young Republicans? The old ones could stand a little of that under-the-counter overhead as well. Even the Democrats, now that Bobby Baker seems indefinitely retired from politics, could probably use a bundle now and then.

Come to think of it, at White House meetings of the "President's Club" of heavy sugar daddies, isn't there always one member who stands in the shadows, turns his head away from cameras and never has much to say?

We may already be well along the Goldwater route to getting Intelligence into politics.

"Well, if Bobby Kennedy runs out of travel ideas it isn't because LBJ hasn't told him where to go."